

# Fordham Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies  
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty



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Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the  
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the  
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at  
[bit.ly/CambsCollection](http://bit.ly/CambsCollection)

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.  
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in  
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library  
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the  
1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – [www.mikepetty.org.uk](http://www.mikepetty.org.uk) for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2017

1898 07 04

Fordham fire, p3

1898 07 13

Fordham confectioner's bankruptcy, p2

1898 12 22

A serious fire occurred at Chippenham. Details now to hand show that the Newmarket Jockey Club Owners and Trainers Fire Brigade have had an experience such as is seldom met with, having been on duty upwards of 18 hours, engaged in fighting a fire which at one time seemed likely to defy all efforts to get it in hand. Fordham Volunteer Fire Brigade was also sent for. It had been feared that the church would be endangered and Rev Mr Wickham climbed to the roof and poured water on the handsome stained glass memorial windows.

1899 08 02

Sir – I was cycling from Cambridge to Soham and between Burwell and Fordham I came suddenly upon a closed and barred gate, which I was kindly permitted to pass through on paying a toll of twopence. I learned that the gate is called the Ness Gate, that the roadway at this point is Crown property. In its present position this gate is a danger to cyclists but its very existence is a ridiculous and monstrous anomaly with its toll of 1d for every vehicle hailing from Burwell and 4d for every vehicle coming from less favoured districts. It is a very unfortunate circumstance that this piece of road is rented by the vice-chairman of the County Council – A.J. Wyatt

1900 01 11

There were no doubt religious services at Fordham on Christmas Day, but with a goodly number of the youth of the place the attraction of the church proved less powerful than those of a public house. A policeman found a large congregation in a room but in less than a minute he was left alone with a table, a box of dice and some coppers. It needed not a Sherlock Holmes to arrive at the conclusion that gambling had been forward and the gamblers had scarpered. It is an unmitigated evil that children should be encouraged to gamble. Let those who have a care for the moral welfare of Fordham look to it

1900 04 04

The following appointments of parish constables were made: Burwell, H. Martin; Brinkley, F. Geo. Howard; Cheveley, J. Nicholls; Chippenham, A. Duffield; Dullingham, J. Smith; Fordham, G.R. Godfrey; Isleham, J. Dilley; Soham H. Rouse; Wicken, W. Barton; Wood Ditton J.J. Howe & C. Cates.

1901 01 09

Quite a sensation was caused in Fordham by the news that the dead body of a young man had been found near a stack on land adjoining a road on the outskirts of the village, along which many people must have passed. The landlady of the Red Lion Inn said she knew deceased as a customer. They took him for a tramp and he hardly spoke all the time he was in the house. He was sitting about for some time with his head on his arms as though sleeping, but was not the worse for drink. Deceased worked as a labourer on the sewerage works at Exning and was in the habit of sleeping out; he had been a rather rough character.

1901 11 21

Mr Benstead of Swaffham Prior asked Newmarket RDC to take over parts of the road which have been metalled by the Fen Reeves. Some councillors spoke in opposition. Mr Tebbitt said there was pretty much 100 miles of such roads in Soham and he would move that Soham Fen roads be served likewise. Mr Munsey said he would do the same as regards Fordham. It was decided to refer the matter to a committee to thoroughly consider and report.

1904 08 15

Mrs Sarah Ann Edwards told the Soham court that she had several occupations and besides being a midwife and a washerwoman, prepared dead bodies for burial. She purchased a pony and lent it to her husband who went to Fordham with it. He got very drunk and went to the Windmill where she made a bargain for the pony with William Harlock. It was taken from the cart and replaced by another one. This was a broken-down creature, only fit for the knacker's yard. When her husband got home she went in search of her own animal and found it in the Ely pig market. Harlock said he had bought it from her husband

1905 05 16

Newmarket Rural District Council discussed the tolls payable at the toll-gate on the Ness Road between Burwell and Fordham. They were a great inconvenience to travellers & the Crown Receivers would accept £600 for the purchase of the tolls, making the road free. Mr Ambrose has promised £100 and if the County Council would contribute £250 they should find the remainder. 05 05 16d

1905 12 01

The toll gate between Burwell and Fordham was removed and declared open and free from tolls for ever. Its removal will be a great blessing to everybody who has occasion to use the road. The price for which the gate has for ever been freed from tolls is £600; the county and rural councils have contributed £250 each and the balance raised by Mr Ambrose who declared the gate open 05 12 01a

1906 04 18

A ten-year-old boy of Fordham made a gruesome discovery whilst watching the waters of the river Snail near Dobede Hole. He noticed what appeared to be a bag floating on the water and, boy-like, started pelting the object with stones. Other lads joined in the fun but eventually an older boy drew the parcel out with a fork and discovered the decomposed body of a child and a piece of brick. PC Ellwood removed it to a shed at the Chequers Inn. 06 04 18

1906 06 30

Fourteen public houses have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904. They include a beer house at Heath Road Litlington, which sold one barrel a week, including stout, and a gallon of ginger wine. All their beer was made from pure malt and hops and it was a better house than the two nearest to it. There were four fully-licensed houses, four beer houses and one off-licence in the village. The Dolphin at Stapleford had been shut up for six weeks as the former landlord had run away and the village appeared to do well without it. The present tenant was a cycle agent and taxidermist as well, 'So you stuff people first and put them on wheels afterwards?' also Cambridge: Jolly Butchers, Star, Sun; Bassingbourn: Crown; Bottisham: Plough; Comberton: Plough; Fordham: Six Bells, Landbeach: Red Cow; Lt Shelford: Carrier's Cart; Stapleford: Dolphin; Steeple Morden: beer house; Waterbeach: Haunch of Mutton, Plough and Horses; Willingham: William IV, Rose and Crown  
06 06 30d,e, f

1906 08 30

Fordham dispute, p4 \*

1908 04 13

Much anxiety was occasioned at Newmarket owing to the non-appearance of the Royal motor car in which Queen Alexandra and the Emperor of Russian were travelling. One absurd report was that Anarchists were to blame. Cyclists went out as search parties and Supt Winters set off in a private car in search of the Royals. The chauffeur had taken a wrong turning and the Queens were lost for the better part of an hour as the car threaded the maze of country lanes around Fordham. A burst tyre caused further delay and they were nearly an hour late. 08 04 13

1908 10 30

Newmarket RDC considered the question of repairs to Landwade bridge. It might not be their responsibility: the overseers had never repaired it, the county was not responsible, the highway surveyors of Fordham and Landwade had never spent money on it, though the Exning surveyors had. It was only a matter of 24 shillings now but might leave them open for more expense in the future.

CWN 08 10 30

1909 02 19

Albert Howe of Fordham, miller, told the bankruptcy court that he began business in 1893, having been apprenticed at the mill he took over. He had no money. A friend bought him a horse and cart and the harness-maker made a set of harness on credit. About seven years ago he bought a second mill for £290, paying £15 deposit and the remainder he had borrowed. His brother had been living at the mill, for which he paid £20 a year. People owed him money but he allowed their accounts to run as he did not want to lose trade. 09 02 19

1909 03 26

Fordham cyclists – Col Ivatt fined – 09 03 26

1909 11 26

Mr Dennis, a man of the utmost credence in Isleham, states quite seriously that on Tuesday night he saw a floating light in the sky. Struck by the unusual spectacle he watched it proceed in a straight light across the railroad and on to Fordham. Mr Dilley, the Newmarket and Isleham carrier was on the road near Fordham at the same time but saw nothing. CWN 09 11 26

1910 01 28

Soham, Fordham – 10 01 28d, Newmarket, Burwell, Ely – 10 01 28e

1910 02 04

Fordham voting incident – 10 02 04d

1910 04 01

There was an accident at Dullingham Station when some wagons jumped the rails. Three timber trucks were thrown over and three cattle trucks overturned. Breakdown gangs were summoned and the up line was cleared in three-and-a-half hours. A number of sleepers, and chairs were smashed but these could be quickly replaced. The difficulty was to get rid of the overturned waggons before the down line could open. The Newmarket stationmaster sent passenger trains to Fordham and thence by the Quy and Swaffham line to Cambridge. 10 04 01

1910 08 12

Mr Bentick, shoemaker of Palace Street, Newmarket, was cycling near Fordham when his attention was attracted by the cries of a woman in a ditch. He questioned a man who said he had only known her a couple of days and they had tramped from Ely that morning. He added that she was ill and did not know what was the matter. Mr Bentick, who is the father of a family, grasped the situation immediately and rendered such assistance as he could until a couple of nurses arrived from the Infectious Hospital close by. Then the woman and her new-born child were conveyed to Newmarket Infirmary. 10 08 12k

1910 08 12

The landlord of the Horse and Groom beer house Soham was summonsed for serving beer to six men on the afternoon of Hospital Sunday. Alfred Jefferies said they knocked at the gate at about 3.17 o'clock. He opened it and asked where they came from. One said 'Burwell', which was over the three mile limit, and others said 'the same'. But in fact they came from Fordham. The court dropped the charge against the landlord but police prosecuted the drinkers who had wrongly represented themselves to be travellers. 10 08 12f

1911 12 22

Obituary – Cyril Dunn-Gardner, squire of Fordham – 11 12 22a

1913 04 04

Congregational union – villages, Burwell, Castle Camps, Chatteris, Eversden, Fordham, Whittlesey, Balsham, West Wrating. Cheveley, Shelford, Six Mile Bottom \*

1913 04 04

Fordham new classroom completed

1913 05 09

Election meetings, Linton, Castle Camps, Shudy Camps, Soham, Fordham, Newmarket , Fen Ditton etc

1913 07 04

Fordham hospital parade

1913 08 15

Fordham district nurse inaugural meeting \*

1913 11 14 CIP

Fordham Old Age Pension fraud

1913 11 21 CIP

Fordham insurance act case

1914 02 13

Blaze. On Monday evening, about 10.40, a big stack fire was only averted by a prompt alarm given by Mr. J. Scott, of Fordham, who was returning home from Isleham. Near the Hall Barn Road he noticed a glow of fire dangerously near two stacks belonging to Mr. F. G. Robins. Quickly giving the alarm, many helpers were soon present, including Supt Winter, P.c.s Rowlinson, Whitwood and Poole. After two hours' hard work, the fire was put out, but the stacks only just escaped. It seems that after thrashing, some mustard litter was ignited and left to burn. This smouldered longer than was expected, and when the wind increased, became a danger to the other stacks. 14 02 13 CIPof

1914 09 25

Fordham nursing association

1914 10 30

Pows – Fordham & Soham – Boyce

1914 11 06

Belgians – Littleport, Burwell, Chatteris, Duxford, Comberton, Sawston, Elsworth, Fen Drayton, Swavesey, Fordham, West Wickham, Wicken, Gamlingay, Willingham, Madingley, Isleham, Landbeach, Linton, Lode, Oakington,

1914 12 04

The Cambridge Corps of Guides is composed of men with an intimate knowledge of their locality, its roads, bridges, blacksmith and wheelwright's shops, camping grounds and billeting accommodation. They will not bear arms or wear uniforms but have been supplied with button-hole badges. In event of invasion they will act as a guide to troops. They include F.W. Crain of Fen Ditton, Frank Muncey from Fordham and George Watson from Babraham

1917 01 03

Fire at Nursery. Damage estimated at about £200 was occasioned by fire which broke out on Thursday evening on the premises of Mr. C. Townsend, of Fordham Nurseries. The fire originated in some wheat straw which had been stored next to a corrugated iron shed. There were about nine tons of straw, the whole of which was destroyed, together with some 25,000 bamboo canes. Firemen's efforts to prevent the flames from spreading were successful.

1920 01 07

Rats killed. Up to December 3rd last the number of rats killed in the county and paid for by Cambs County Council under the Rats Order, was 35,516. The districts concerned were: Little Abington (number of rats killed 504), Ashley (980), Balsham (2,718), Borough Green (358), Bottisham (999), Cheveley (631). Chippenham (838), Great Chishill (322), Croxton (225), Dullingham (1,205), Duxford (754), Elsworth (39), Fordham (8,072), Fowlmere (489), Harston (322), Hauxton (186). Heydon (1,593), Hildersham (236). Horseheath (324), Ickleton (1,095), Isleham (3,809), Kennett (1,422). Kirtling (396), Kneesworth (549), Linton (584), Lode (548), Melbourn (442), Newton (160), Pampisford (429), Sawston (332), Shepreth (313). Shudy Camps (1.38), Snailwell (786), Soham (2,896), Stetchworth (1,105) Swaffham Prior (1,032), Thriplow (464), Waterbeach (967), West Wickham (995), Whittlesford (324), Great Wilbraham (846), Wood Ditton (2,017).

1921 07 20

Railway accident, death employee at Fordham station – 21 07 20c

1923 08 24

The formal opening of the Soham water works took place yesterday. Mr Ransom said that Soham could now boast of a pure water supply, which, in view of the fact that less alcohol was consumed than in bygone years, was very necessary. Many would be grateful for the water and he hoped there would be further applications from the inhabitants, so that all would pay their share of the rates. The site of the water works joins the main road to Fordham. Here has been erected a magnificent water tower, substantially built in red brickwork, which constitutes a landmark for many miles around.

1923 09 18

Following a recent letter from the Vicar of Fordham in praise of the free library scheme which is being run in the villages by the Cambridgeshire County Council. Boxes of books of all classes are sent to the various villages, where demand for them has been found to exist, and are returned at the end of three months in exchange for a fresh supply. The first boxes went to 65 villages and boxes were also sent to 43 elementary schools for the special use of children. There are now 88 library centres in the county, and only 28 villages have not yet taken advantage of the benefit of the service. The scheme aims to develop the reading habit amongst those who have, as yet, been content to read nothing but the Sunday newspaper and a penny novelettes. Those in authority have no desire to attain a standard which may be called "highbrow" but hope to increase a healthy appetite for good books

1923 12 12

A Fordham newsagent and fruiterer appeared for his examination in bankruptcy. He said that up to 1914 he worked for his mother hawking fish, fruit and vegetables, then she gave up the business and handed it over to him. It was £28 in debt at the time and there were a pony and cart and a barrow worth about £7.10s. About six months later the pony had to be destroyed. He added the news agency business in 1915 employing three boys. His average takings per week were about £67 for the fish and news agency and fruit and vegetables £30.

1925 05 02

A Fordham smallholder was summoned for not sending his daughter to school. Mr Savidge, attendance officer, said the excuse was illness. The father told him that if he came again he would

throw him in the drain. As the girl was now 14 and over age an attendance order could not be made, so witness asked for a fine. The father had three other children. He was fined 10/-

1925 09 15

The East Cambridgeshire Motor Cycle and Light Car Club held their motor cycle 'Rodeo' at Fordham. The track was in good condition and some really exciting racing was witnessed. The events included Balloon Bursting, Ski-riding, Potato race, Polo match & Egg and Spoon Race. Riding Mechanical Lizzie - this was a pole mounted on two wheels and D. Muggleton gave a splendid exhibition of riding whilst drawn by a motor cycle. He survived one round, but on the second he fell off, and the wheel collapsed, to the intense merriment of the spectators.

1925 12 23

A referendum was taken in the village of Fordham on the question of providing a public water supply in place of the present methods of landlords supplying their own properties by means of private wells. This was not sufficiently decisive and it was decided to take a poll of the village. By a majority of four to one Fordham has refused it. The result was quite expected. A few wells have been found to be polluted but they only need to be deepened and the top soil kept free of sewage. Between the two streams the soil is boggy and the water polluted by decaying vegetation.

1926 01 02

Mrs Angelina Dunn Gardner, of Fordham Abbey, left £1,500 to the Fordham Parochial Church Council for the purchase of a suitable piece of land and the erection thereon of a Church Hall to be used primarily for occasional services or the moral, physical, social, intellectual and spiritual interests of the inhabitants. She directed that the building should bear a tablet of stone recording the gift and its object.

1926 02 18

Much of the water supply for Fordham is derived from shallow wells in close proximity to groups of cottages, pit privies and refuse heaps. Almost all the 104 wells are liable to gross pollution and unfit for drinking purposes. In addition a few houses are dependent upon unfiltered water from the river. The Medical Officer of Health regards this as a grave potential danger and is of the opinion that the only way of dealing with the matter is to provide an ample and pure supply for the whole village

1926 08 04

The East Cambs Motor Cycle and Light Car Club organised a grand motor rodeo at Fordham. They are fortunate in having people whose names are household words where grass track racing is concerned. Mr H. Smith's machine burst into flames, but a Pyrene was brought into action in time to save it and the owner was able to resume in later races. Events such as trick riding, ski-riding, chariot racing and plank jumping were received with acclamation. At the conclusion a ladies' race was suggested and if they had not quite got the speed they had at least got the proper racing attitude.

1927 06 30

The memorial sports pavilion in the recreation grounds at Fordham was formally opened by Viscount St Davids. It was erected to the memory of the late Mrs Dunn-Gardner in the grounds she gave to the parishioners. The building contains two spacious dressing rooms, for the Cricket & Bowls clubs. Fordham possessed one of the best recreation grounds in the whole of the Eastern Counties, what they had to do was to improve the ground and keep it tidy. What they would like in time to come was an athletic ground

1927 08 31

Mr John Goddard has been railway stationmaster at Fordham for 18 years and taken an active part in village affairs. He is now retiring and the sum of £44 was raised by his fellow villagers, some of whom were blessed with an abundance of this world's goods and some who had no such encumbrances. As stationmaster he had been the friend of all, helping to forward everybody's traffic with the greatest despatch and the least amount of friction.



1928 04 14

Newmarket council considered the question of standing places for motor 'buses and recommended the present arrangements in St Mary's Square should remain in force for the time being. This class of vehicle is likely to get more numerous on the road and certain portions of the Fordham roadside should be defined as hackney carriage stands for the setting down of passengers. It having also been suggested that St Mary's Square might afford a suitable site for a motor-park, but having regard to certain manorial rights existing there, it was resolved that the solicitors representing the Lord of the Manor be invited to attend the next meeting.

1928 07 26

Burwell Parish Council called attention to the need of a shorter route between Burwell and Wicken now that Dimock's Cote Bridge had been opened to traffic. Although the villages were only two miles apart the present distance by road was 8½ miles. This could be remedied by the hardening of the first driveway and making 30 chains of a new road. It would reduce the distance for all traffic that had to pass via Fordham and Stretham and be a great saving of time and expense to road users which would pay for itself by lessening the mileage of road used

1928 08 24

An important improvement in East Cambs will be effected by the new road which it is proposed should be made from Burwell to the Wicken main road in Heditch Field. It would relieve the main road through Fordham of a considerable amount of traffic and assist an agricultural area. Newmarket R.D.C. has appointed a special committee to deal with the matter

1929 05 09

Fordham man buried in best suit – American custom – CDN 9.5.1929

1929 10 28

The well-known cement works of Messrs R. Stephenson & Son between Burwell and Fordham, now closed, have been purchased by the Associated Cement-makers Companies, a powerful combine owning many cement factories. For a long time it has been felt in Burwell that the only hope of carrying on the factory was to merge it in a combine. During the war the factory did very well indeed because the Government wanted so much cement that every factory was employed. Today orders are far from plentiful. As one of a large combine the Burwell factory may get its share, and the works may give considerable employment.

1931 02 13

A farmer told the bankruptcy court that he had rented Block Farm, Fordham from the County Council. But the operations were very unsuccessful owing to the water on the land. "When I took the land the County Council man said 'There's not a drop of water on it', but it was a dry time and when it was flooded you couldn't walk across it; you would sink in. I had acres and acres of corn all spoilt. Three or four people at the place before I went there all went wrong". 31 02 13f-g

1931 04 03

A fire was discovered in a gable of The Grove, Fordham; the damage was not great. The brigade cannot discover any cause of the outbreak. It is a part of old Cambridge folk lore that a fire always follows if a hare runs down the main street of a village. The week before a hare did run down the street at Fordham. It was perused by Mr Richard Nicholls, a septuagenarian, and was killed in a shed within three yards of the place where this fire broke out. 31 04 03m

1933 09 27

Flying-officer Norman Styche, who formerly lived in Fordham and Cambridge, was one of two men who perished when their bomber crashed at Bamburgh after a successful "battle" against the Home

Fleet. Having attending Soham Grammar School he had got books on flying out of the library and learnt all he could. He had previously been in two crashes, but was unhurt in both. 33 09 27

1935 04 03

Robert Brown sold two million gallons 'Somerlite' lamp oil a year around Cambridge. He got oil from various sources, mixed it together and told the public that it had no equal. So when his sister-in-law, an oil and hardware merchant at Fordham, started selling oil that did not come from him under the 'Somerlite' name he took the case to court. Their vans both carried that name and there was a danger that people might assume the two were the same, he claimed. But the case was dismissed. Fordham Parish Council had contacted B.C.H. Electricity Company to seek costs for lighting the streets but they had not replied. Soham Gas Company intended to run mains to the village and enquiries were made of them. Any scheme had to be approved by two-thirds of the electorate but a large number of people could not afford to pay their rates now and this would mean another 1s 6d in the pound. 35 04 03

1937 06 17

The RDC scheme for the collection of unburnable rubbish attracted criticism. In the old parts of Burwell the lanes were very narrow and it was doubtful the lorry could get along. Some houses had been left and in others the receptacle had been taken as well. The parish had turned down a cheap scheme which worked well for a dear one that didn't. But Barway and the Fen had help to pay for collection in the past and would now be part of the scheme. The outskirts of Soham would be cleared and the dump shifted to a covered dump at Fordham. In the old area collections were made so casually that to call them collections was an absurdity. 37 06 17

1937 09 22

Fordham waterworks scheme 37 09 22

1938 01 05

An occupant of the Council Houses, Mildenhall Road, Fordham was charged with stealing two rabbit traps, the property of Major Thirwell Philipson. Charles Howes, an under-gamekeeper, said he went to look at some rabbit traps on the Chippenham Road and saw two were sprung. He could not set them owing to the frost. The next morning the traps were missing. Pc Parmenter testified that he went to the defendant's house and found two wet and muddy traps in the shed. The man said he'd been walking along the road when his dog brought a rabbit and trap to him. He'd got the other from Isleham Pits. He was found guilty 38 01 05

1939 09 14

The headmistress of the Jews' Infant School, Commercial End, London says they were all given the heartiest welcome in Fordham. Not one teacher is in an uncomfortable billet and nobody wants to be rehoused. Quite a number of parents came down pm Sunday and all were delighted at the reception given to their children. Mr Pickett, headmaster of the village school, is excellent. Village people have been quite ignorant of Jewish children and Jewish ways and a great deal of good should result from the contact. 39 09 14a

1940 02 14

Fordham grocer, George Palmer, refused wine licence – 40 02 14a

1940 08 15

Fordham gravel pit accident, six girls trapped, three die – 40 08 15

1940 11 07

Fordham schoolmaster accused receiving stolen petrol from soldiers – 40 11 07a

1941 11 07

Fordham headmaster not guilty of receiving stolen army petrol – 41 01 04a

1951 07 17

Not a single person from Landwade (population 20) came to object to the proposed union of that parish with Fordham at the local inquiry. Apart from County Council officers only one person attended – Mr B.C. Gardiner, clerk to Fordham parish council – who said that his council were willing for Landwade to become part of their parish. Landwade parish council has not met for some time although the law prescribes that a parish meeting should be held at least twice a year.

1954 09 09

The 'Kum-In Café' sited on the Cambridge Road corner at Ely has changed hands as a result of an auction at the White Hart Hotel when it was sold to Mr F.C. Leavis of Cambridge for £1,650. The café premises, 43-47 St Mary's Street were offered together with a flat and houses with a large walk-in yard. But a modern residence, 'Balmoral' at Newmarket Road, Fordham including a garage, garden and engineer's workshop was withdrawn from sale at £2,700

1955 08 26

Many Fordham residents have been unable to sleep because of an ever-increasing swarm of noisy crickets: in some houses forty have been caught a night. They are everywhere – in the living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens and pantries. One was even found drowned in a dish of beetroot and vinegar. The worst affected area is the R.D.C. refuse pit. Now officials have started spraying and it is hoped they will soon be exterminated. 55 08 26

1955 09 30

When a Hawker Hunter jet fighter crash-landed near Upware pumping station the pilot was pulled from the aircraft and taken to the Ely RAF Hospital by a helicopter which had taken off from Waterbeach airfield carrying the Station Commander, Gp Capt Chackfield, to the scene of the crash. Units from Cambs and Fordham fire brigades were called but the aircraft did not catch fire. 55 09 30a

1958 04 17

The sewage position at Newport Avenue, Fordham is a disgrace, councillors heard. Effluent runs on the tops of the gardens as the existing plant is overloaded. The position was a 'real shocker'. It's as bad as it can be. But now the Ministry had approved plans for two pairs of bungalows. Something should be done but there was not sufficient space for septic tanks. The only solution was a permanent sewerage scheme. 58 04 17a

1958 05 24

Fordham Abbey estate sale – 58 05 24c

1958 09 17

Light industries are needed to stop young people leaving the area. The rate of migration from Isleham had been amazing and 75 people leave Dullingham to work each day. The biscuit factory at Fordham has closed down because transport facilities were so bad that the cost of bringing materials more than outweighed the cheaper cost of labour. There were factory sites at Soham and the council was prepared to assist any firm wishing to move in. 58 09 17

1958 10 02

"The reputation of Soham is getting shocking and it is time that the young people learned to behave themselves", a magistrate remarked. "It is getting to the state of a lot of Teddy Boys; if you had differences to settle, instead of creating this awful maul and fight, you should have gone with your father and talked the thing out", he told a couple summonsed after a dispute at the Chequers public house, Fordham. 58 10 02 & a

1959 04 04

Jack McVitie of Bermondsey was one of four men convicted of possessing gelatine and of carrying a flick knife. Their Ford Zephyr car was stopped by two police cars at Balsham after a chase. They claimed they had been asked to take a parcel to a house in Fordham but had lost the address. They drove up and down a number of times but could not stop because the car had no lights, having been involved in an accident on the way. But the judge said they had been embarking on a safe blowing expedition. 59 04 04 a & b

***The Cambridgeshire Collection has newspaper cuttings files from this date***

1961 92 17

The Old People's Welfare Council believes the best thing for the elderly is for them to live independently as long as possible. But many cannot and there are an increasing number of people wanting care in their old age. The main problem is finding suitable premises to make into old people's homes. In 1948 the County Council had to do with Linton Hospital and a few beds at Chesterton Hospital. Since then they have been modernised and improved. After the war buildings were very difficult to get because of competition from firms wanting office accommodation and the rising cost of land. The first new home was The Grove, Fordham in 1951, followed by Willingham House and in 1956 Primrose Croft was adapted to take 35 elderly residents. The future plans are to erect purpose-designed buildings 61 02 17b

1961 12 29

The railway line between Cambridge and Mildenhall opened on Whit Monday 1884 with the Fordham to Mildenhall extension nine months later. The branch line was probably never self-supporting and today there are two trains daily. All the villages between Barnwell and Fordham are well served by buses and it is only Mildenhall and Isleham that do not have a satisfactory alternative service. All existing parcel facilities would remain except at Isleham and Quy stations which would be reduced to unstaffed sidings. Even at Quy staff would be provided during the heavy sugar beet season to assist farmers loading traffic, an Inquiry heard. 61 12 20a & b

1962 06 01

From being almost a novelty, the steam engine has come to be regarded with sentimental veneration, receiving the same loving care and attention as vintage motor cars. The Pumfrey family of Duxford have owned a Ruston and Proctor seven n.h.p. engine since it was bought new in 1914 while Mr H. Nicholls of Cheveley has preserved a 1902 single crank compound Burrell which was used for estate work at Fordham Abbey. The Taylor brothers of Wimbish, who have a reputation for being assiduous collectors, displayed the formidable Fowler 18 n.h.p. double crank compound ploughing machine built in 1918 and still occasionally used for ploughing and mole draining 62 06 01a

1962 12 28

Fireman fought with frozen water hydrants at Fordham while a string of store sheds owned by Turners Transport were going up in flames by the side of a 2,000 gallon diesel oil tank and a set of petrol pumps. Lorry spare parts and a company director's 16-foot motor launch were blazing amid great clouds of smoke. The launch's petrol tank blew up with a bang and flames shot out. After an hour the yard was like a skating rink, the water freezing almost as soon as it hit the ground. 62 12 28

1963 93 27

The Beeching report on the future of British Railways suggests the closing down of 19 stations in the Cambridge area – including three serving the main towns of Haverhill, Saffron Walden and St Ives. There would be the complete withdrawal of passenger services from branch lines, Cambridge-March, Gt Shelford-Marks Tey, Audley End & Bartlow lines. Amongst the village stations closed to passenger traffic would be Histon, Wimblington and Chatteris, Bartlow, Pampisford and Linton together with Soham and Fordham. Services from Black Bank would also cease 63 03 27 & a

1964 02 19

Petrol station at Mildenhall Road Fordham allowed at appeal – 64 02 19b

1964 07 31

Fordham village life photo feature – 64 07 31a

1964 09 03

Passenger services on the Ely to Newmarket line are to be withdrawn on January 4th and Soham and Fordham stations will be closed. Alternative bus services will be provided, though the stationmaster says that the present system is quite adequate to cope with the two or three passengers who use the stations. The line is uneconomic: six trains stop a day during summer but none run at time when a heavy load of passengers could be expected. The staff of 12 at each station will be retained to deal with freight traffic such as scrap iron from Middlesbrough and flowers from local nurseries 64 09 03b

1964 09 04

A journey on the fated Ely-Newmarket railway line shows why it has become the victim of Beeching's axe. The only regular traveller is a British Railway employee who uses it to get home to Fordham. Two people got on at Ely – both BR staff – and the only other passengers were an American couple touring Britain. There was nobody waiting at Soham or Fordham. Sometimes up to 30 people get on the Ely-bound station at Soham before changing trains to Cambridge but mostly only a few people use it. 64 09 04

1974 06 12

After 50 years of growing and packing flowers on a farm in Fordham Mr Reginald Nicholls is retiring. He has worked for Mr Reginald Reader at Halesfield, Fordham, since he set up as a flower grower in 1924. He is foreman in the packing shed, where up to 950 boxes of flowers are made up every day for shipment to Manchester, Glasgow and London. "I can remember when we had 30 people working in the packing shed, and on August Bank Holiday the fields were blue with scabius as far as you can see", he said. Mr Reader said: "You can't make money growing flowers as you could. You can't get the labour. Some of the women who pick with me have been with us for 20 years"

1976 09 22

All fish in the River Snail, near Fordham, have been killed after a discharge of pollution from Newmarket Sewage Treatment Works during routine replacement of drive equipment to the aerators in the activated sludge plant. Coun Newport said the river was often used for paddling by young children and the pollution could have resulted in an epidemic. "The Anglian Water Authority did not mention it, hoping it would pass unnoticed", he said. "Fordham has already threatened the AWA with High Court action if this occurs again".

1980 08 02

Fordham School was scheduled to be demolished until the Council listed it, allowing only interior changes. It has now been turned into four homes. The headmaster's house and the original school of 1849 comprise two while the 1870 buildings housed two more. One which used to be the school hall and gym, last used seven years ago. The sitting room is dominated by the original 15-feet high windows; it is well-insulated though it might take a small fortune to change the curtaining. 80 08 02

1983 10 29

Customers had a dramatic escape when a lorry ploughed into a newsagents on the corner of Market Street and River Lane, Fordham. The vehicle that became firmly embedded in the front of the building was carrying a load of wheat feed from Soham back to Coton. The crash has renewed calls for a by-pass to alleviate the heavy traffic going through the village. 83 10 29 p1